

THE MORNING NEWS

Your Source for local news in English

Caya G.F. Betico Croes 111 T. 588-9517 F. 5889518.

Super star "Baby Face" on stage for Aruba's Soul Beach Festival May 24th



Singer, composer, producer and 10 times Grammy Award winner, Kenneth "Baby Face" Edmonds is expected to perform in this year's Aruba Soul Beach Music Festival.

"Baby Face" is a multifaceted artist with different talents recognized by different Grammys. During the 90's he wrote and produced works for, among others, Madonna, Bobby Brown, Boys II Men, Whitney Houston and Eric Clapton. His musical career did not stop there. In 1989 he produced his own album... Tender Love, which won him double platinum. He then produced 'For the Cool in You' with the top 5 hit:

"When Can I See you Again."

In Aruba, his fans can expect a spectacular show. Everyone will enjoy his romantic hits. Aruba is delighted to welcome "Baby Face" to our One Happy Island.

His shows are also among the best attended internationally in the Caribbean region. His presentation will be on Saturday 24th of May. This show is expected to be simply fantastic!

Last December "Babyface" produced an album together with the famous Toni Braxton titled: "Love, Marriage & Divorce".

Executive Producer for

Soul Beach Productions, indicated that..."we are very pleased to have artists who have scored hits after hits and who knows how to entertain their fans...one of whom is super star Kenny "Baby Face" Edmonds. He is the primary artist of the Soul Beach Music Festival this year." According to Adkins, the combination of "Baby Face's" music and Aruba as a destination will make this event a unique experience never to be forgotten for those who attend this festival.

Robin Thicke is expected to perform on Sunday the 25th of May. This event is part of the 14th edition of the Soul Beach Music Festival to take place here from May 21st to 26th, 2014. Tickets will go on sale at the end of March. For more information check the website, www.soulbeach.net.

The opposition's main leader Henrique Capriles had earlier said he would not attend, dismissing the talks as a government photo op.

Cont. on pg 6

US to guarantee \$1 bn loan for Ukraine, warns Moscow

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The United States on Wednesday warned Russia against any military intervention in Ukraine as it revealed it was drawing up an economic aid package including \$1 billion in loan guarantees.

But US Secretary of State John Kerry also insisted Washington was not looking for a confrontation with

Venezuelan opposition rejects dialogue with government

CARACAS (AFP) - Venezuela's opposition refused Wednesday to take part in talks that were called by the government in a bid to halt three weeks of protests that have left 14 dead.

"We will not lend ourselves to a sham dialogue that would end in a mockery of our compatriots," the opposition coalition MUD said in a letter to Vice President Jorge Arreaza.

President Nicolas Maduro had called a "national peace conference" for later in the day, but so far only the country's leading business federation and Venezuela's Roman Catholic church have confirmed they would attend.

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MUD, an umbrella group that includes most opposition parties said the government was responsible for the current crisis.

And it accused of "excessive repression that has included the participation of armed civilians convened by the authorities."

Oil-rich but deeply divided Venezuela has been swept by student-led protests since February 4, posing the greatest challenge yet to Maduro's 11-month-old government.

Maduro has sought to deepen the socialist, anti-American policies of his charismatic predecessor and mentor, the late Hugo Chavez.

But public anger over shortages of food and other basics, soaring inflation and rampant crime has served as kindling for street violence.

Cont. on pg 6

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Loyal Visitors honored at Marriott Surf Club by Aruba Tourism Authority



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Mrs. Barbara Dupont resident of New Hampshire honored as Distinguished Visitor.

Mr. Pete Economou resident of Bayside New York honored as Distinguished Visitor.

Mr. David G. and Charlene K. Newstrom resident of Williamsburg, Virginia honored as Distinguished Visitors.

The symbolic honorary title is presented in the name of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation to guests who visit Aruba for 10 to 20 years consecutive years.

The main reasons why they keep coming back to Aruba are the friendly people, the beaches, the beautiful weather, and the local food.

The certificate was presented by Ms. Darline S. de Cuba representing Aruba Tourism Authority and Mrs. Jenny Boekhoudt Executive Secretary and Mario v/d Werf Loss Prevention Supervisor of Marriott Hotel Surf Club.

Reality of San Nicolas becoming the second tourism capital and center of culture of our island getting closer

ORANJESTAD -- Next week an Aruban delegation is off to New Orleans where they will hold different meetings in the context of the vision of the government to make San Nicolas Aruba's second tourism capital. The intention is to also make San Nicolas the second cultural center of Aruba

Sue Ann Lee, advisor to the Minister of Tourism, indicated that the process began back in September of last year when Ministers Oduber and de Meza invited various local investors to see a presentation of the vision for the main street of San Nicolas, and to explore converting it into a Caribbean Street.

The intention is for this main street to become one of entertainment with different

restaurants, souvenir shops, activities and much more to revive San Nicolas, which is the primary objective.

From this the idea of going to New Orleans with our local investors was born.

They would like to see how New Orleans did it. New Orleans, reportedly, has much similarity to San Nicolas.

This first phase will be to get investors on the same wavelength as the government. The trip to New Orleans is planned for March 6th to 9th. The Ministers will meet with, among others, the Mayor of New Orleans to renew the Sister City Agreement between Aruba and New Orleans. They also intend to exchange knowledge on different areas of mutual interest.

A meeting is also planned with the French Quarter Merchant Association and with the Tourism Board of the city, and with the Vieux Carre Commission. This will enable the Aruba delegation to get an explanation of how the process was and the potential which exists for this new product for Aruba.

Ten local investors will be traveling with the delegation; among them, bankers, Caribbean Foundation and a few private investors from the real estate sector, food and beverage and from the retail industry.

After this mission the government hopes that there will be some concrete commitments from a few investors for San Nicolas.

Continued on pg 3



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A view from a 20 feet bridge above L.G. Smith Boulevard:

Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino offers an impressive view to enjoy Carnival 60



ORANJESTAD – February – Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino together with GM Affairs is celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Aruban Carnival, in style. For the first time a bridge will be constructed to offer international visitors, guests and local public an impressive view of the Aruban Carnival.

"60 year anniversary of our Carnival should be celebrated in a great way, we want to offer our guests a different way to experience our parades. This 'deck' will offer a helicopter view that will make the experience of our parades really memorable" this according to Zugheila Lindeborg, marketing execu-

tive for Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino.

The Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino deck will be located above all the action of the grand parade in Oranjestad. Those whom are part of the carnival parade (participants) will march underneath the bridge at the same time giving the guest an outstanding view from above!

In order to accommodate everyone Renaissance Aruba Resort & Casino will offer a RLIFE LIVE package which includes entrance tickets to the VIP deck for Sunday March 2nd at a cost of \$100 per person, beverage tokens and live performances of DJ's, SMB, Mesquitas and Myron Kelly. Those who buy their entrance for the VIP deck will be 20 feet above the

L.G. Smith Boulevard. This will definitely provide an unforgettable experience of Carnival 60. Those whom are

interested in VIP tickets can email at; sales@arubarenaisance.com. Admission is limited, so don't delay!

Reality of San Nicolas ...

Cont. from pg 2

There are fiscal incentives in place for San Nicolas, making it attractive for business. They hope to see 4 or 5 investments in San Nicolas this year yet.

According to Sue Ann Lee, the government has made sizeable investments in the infrastructure of San Nicolas. For example, they have begun improving the Baby Beach, created a tourism office, museum and other facilities. Slowly they have brought more life to the area and business to San Nicolas. According to Sue Ann Lee, the intention is not to create entertainment just for night time, but activities for the entire day: shops, art and culture for the entire family and other activities to bring stability, economy and jobs to the area. San Nicolas ought to evolve into the second tourism city of Aruba and a center of culture for our island.

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"Awesome local dishes!!"
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"Great Food Friendly Service"
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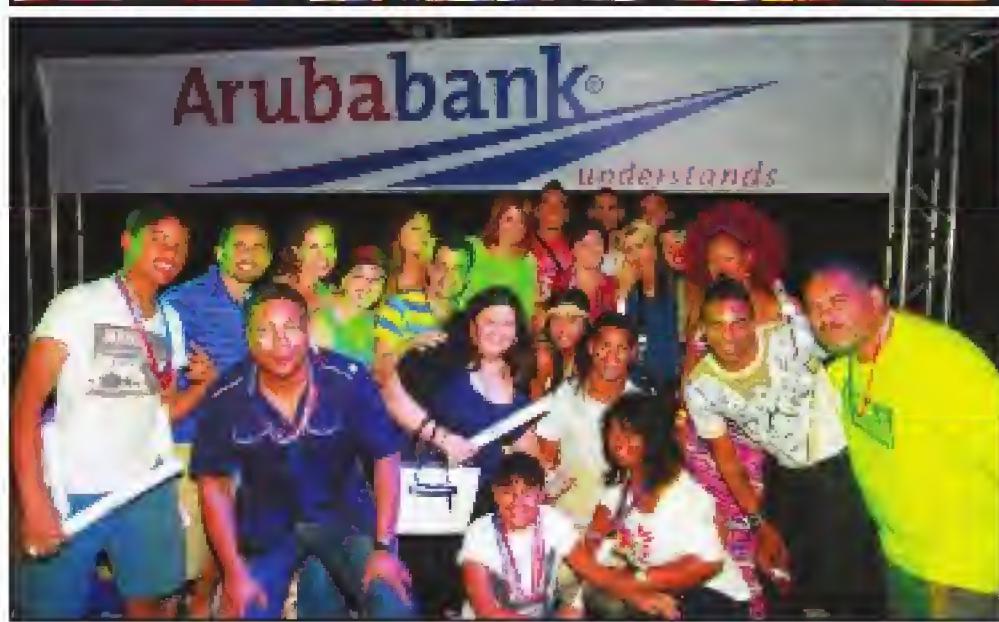
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As one of Carnival's major sponsors

Aruba Bank was greatly involved in last weekend's activities



ORANJESTAD -- Aruba Bank, as one of Carnival's most important sponsors was ever-present during last weekend's activities, partnering with the Aruba Carnival



Foundation to produce and present the Reina Grandi queen election where Aruba's Carnival Queen 60 was crowned. The bank was also involved in the presentation of the spectacular Lighting Parade in Oranjestad on Saturday night, and in the colorful, unforgettable Grand Annual Children's Parade in Oranjestad on Sunday.

During Friday night's Reina Grandi queen election, the bank's Marketing & Public Relations Manager, Shanoule Bikker, served as jury member, representing of the bank. As such she enjoyed the honor of crowning Reina Cultural di Philipinas, the Cultural Queen representative the Phillipine community here. The bank's heartfelt congratulations were extended to Reina di Carnaval 60, the island's ultimate Carnival royalty Zuriah Flem-

ming, and her first runner up Ziaziane Goeloe, representing the T.O.B Carnival group, and second runner up Thaina Lacle, representing the University di Aruba. Congratulations are also due to all participants who contributed so generously to the success of Aruba's Carnival activities last weekend.

On Saturday during the Lighting Parade and on Sunday during the Grand Annual Children's Parade, Aruba Bank as main sponsor enjoyed the pleasure and the honor of starting the parade hosting actors and actresses of the Ballet of Venevision,

as the opening act for the festivity.

With the World Cup in Brazil underway and in view of the fact that Aruba Bank is the sponsor of the game transmissions on TeleAruba, the bank invited Fuleco, the FIFA World Cup mascot to participate in the Grand Annual Children's Parade in Oranjestad. Aruba Bank also sponsored BMW's band performance during the Last Lap of this year's Carnival parades.

As Aruba's biggest Cultural manifestation Aruba Bank is proud to serve the community and contribute to the growth and further development of the island's most popular celebration.

Carnaval Schedule

WED. FEB. 26

8:00 p.m. International Concert - Window to the World

Caribbean Night

THU. FEB. 27

8:00 p.m. Parada di Luz -- San Nicolas

SAT. MARCH 1

Jouvert Morning - San Nicolas - 3 a.m.
San Nicolas Grand Carnaval Parade - 11 a.m.

SUN. MARCH - 2

Aruba's Grand Carnaval Parade - Oranjestad - 10 am





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ATA to ensure that Aruba's Diamond Carnival celebration reaches the entire world



ORANJESTAD -- Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA) is very pleased with the great interest from the international press for Aruba's Diamond Carnaval Celebration."

The majority of the international press will be stationed on a stage in front of the main ATA office, which is located below the Talk of the Town Hotel. There will be a large banner in front of the stage to identify this spot. The stage was especially erected to accommodate the international press. There are press crews expected from the USA, Holland, Scandinaova, Suriname, Canada, Curacao, Bonaire, Colombia and Venezuela.

ATA appeals to the Aruban community and all participants in the parade and musical bands to "show our best face and dance."

Make Aruba proud!

They requests musical bands to salute the international press people with a warm welcome, bienvenido,



welkom to Aruba.

A balanced program, in addition to Carnaval, has been prepared for the press so they can get acquainted with Aruba as a tourism destination. A special lunch has been prepared for them with all group leaders and winning musicians are invited where the press would have an opportunity to chat with them.

There will also be a tour in Jeeps and the Catamaran. They will also attend the Lighting Parade in San Nico-

las and Jouvert Morning

Aruba expects to welcome some 30 international press crews, among them, 4 television and written press, magazines and online publications. All press members will reside at The Mill Resort and Talk of the Town during their stay on the island.

ATA is grateful to the entire community and all Carnaval participants for their cooperation in making this Carnaval a success for Aruba as a tourism destination.

Venezuelan opposition rejects dialogue...

Cont. from pg 1

Maduro has responded to the street protests with force, arresting scores of demonstrators as well as a prominent opposition leader, Leopoldo Lopez.

"The government talks of dialogue, it talks of peace, but it's only an empty appeal... to go to the Miraflores palace to have a picture taken," Capriles said in a radio interview.

- Sporadic clashes overnight -

Caracas was calm Wednesday morning after a night of occasional clashes in the capital.

But the opposition and the government staged separate marches, in a vivid display of the polarization roiling a country with the world's largest oil reserves.

Several thousand women dressed in white marched through the city to a military barracks to demand "an end to the repression and violence by the security bodies."

"We know that it's the Cubans, an invading army, who are giving the orders," said a document the women planned to deliver at the barracks. "Don't let them."

Lopez's wife, Lilian Tintori, led the march with opposition deputy Maria Corina Machado.

Meanwhile, thousands of government supporters marched toward the presidential palace to rally for "peace" and against what Maduro insists is an opposition "coup d'état."

In Rome, Pope Francis appealed for reconciliation, calling for "mutual forgiveness and a sincere dialogue, respectful of truth and justice."

"I sincerely hope that violence and hostility will cease as soon as possible, and that the whole Venezuelan people, beginning with political leaders and institutions, will endeavor to promote reconciliation," the Argentine pope said.

The Organization of American States scheduled a special session of its permanent council for Thursday to consider a request by Panama for a foreign ministers' meeting on the crisis.

"We're prepared to have a change in this relationship, this tension between our countries has gone on for too long in our view," US Secre-

tary of State John Kerry said Wednesday.

"But we are not going to sit around and be blamed for things we have never done," he added.

On Tuesday, the United States announced it would expel three Venezuelan diplomats, a tit-for-tat response to the expulsion of three Americans by Caracas last week.

The US action came the same day that Maduro's government named a new ambassador to Washington.

Venezuelan authorities said Wednesday they had arrested five intelligence agents for suspected ties to killings during protests against President Nicolas Maduro's government.

On Monday, nine people were arrested in the same case including three SEBIN intelligence service members, and the rest police.

"The prosecutor's office has detained five SEBIN officials for their alleged connections to the deaths of demonstrators Bassil Da Costa and Juan Montoya," it said in a statement, noting that brought to 14 the number of arrests in the case.

Da Costa was a student involved in the protests against Maduro's government, while Montoya was part of a pro-government organization.

US court orders Google to pull YouTube anti-Islam film

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - A US appeals court on Wednesday ordered YouTube to take down an anti-Islamic movie that triggered protests in the Muslim world, after an actress alleged she had been duped into appearing in it.

The 2012 appearance of "Innocence of Muslims" on Google's video-sharing site provoked deadly violence, but the current legal case against it relates only to the concerns of one of its stars.

US actress Cindy Lee Garcia brought a lawsuit claiming she was tricked into appearing in the film, without realizing its provocative anti-Muslim slant, and has received death threats as a result of it.

A lower court refused to

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US Judge strikes down Texas gay marriage ban

CHICAGO (AFP) - A US federal judge struck down a gay marriage ban in the state of Texas on Wednesday in the latest court ruling to find such prohibitions unconstitutional.

But wedding bells will not soon be ringing for gay couples in the Lone Star state because the judges stayed execution of his injunction pending an expected appeal.

Judge Orlando Garcia ruled the ban had no "rational relationship to a legitimate government purpose" and violated the constitutional guarantee of equal protection under the law. "Equal protection is at the heart of our legal system and is essential for the existence of a free society," Garcia wrote in a 48-page opinion.

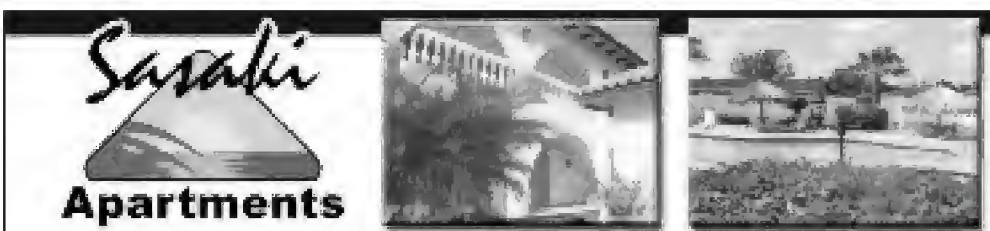
Texas Governor Rick Perry was quick to denounce the decision and vowed to "fight for the rights of Texas to self-determine the laws of our state."

"Texans spoke loud and clear by overwhelmingly voting to define marriage as a union between a man and a woman in our Constitution, and it is not the role of the federal government to overturn the will of our citizens," he said.

The decision comes as the state of Michigan is in court defending its gay marriage ban.

Federal judges in Virginia, Utah, Oklahoma, Ohio and Kentucky have recently ruled in favor of marriage for lesbian and gay couples, as has the New Mexico Supreme Court.

The rulings follow a landmark Supreme Court decision in June finding that couples in same-sex marriages were entitled to the same benefits and protections as their heterosexual counterparts.



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Muslim killer of UK soldier jailed for life, accomplice 45 years

LONDON (AFP) - A Muslim extremist convicted of hacking British soldier Lee Rigby to death on a London street was ordered Wednesday to spend the rest of his life behind bars, while his fellow killer was jailed for a minimum of 45 years.

Michael Adebolajo, 29, who received the whole-life term, and Michael Adebowale, 22, were dragged from the dock at the Old Bailey court in London after they started screaming at the judge during the sentencing.

The Muslim converts were found guilty in December of ploughing into Rigby with a car before attacking him with knives and a meat cleaver in broad daylight outside his barracks in Woolwich, southeast London, in May 2013.

Minutes before judge Nigel Sweeney passed sentence, Adebolajo started shouting "Allahu akbar" and Adebowale called out "that's a lie" in response to claims that they had been radicalised.

They then scuffled with guards before being carried down to the holding cells.

Sweeney said the pair's behaviour on the Woolwich

streets was "sickening and pitiless".

Wednesday's sentencing had been delayed for several weeks because the judge wanted clarification on a European ruling that made it uncertain whether whole-life jail terms could still be imposed.

England's Court of Appeal upheld the right to do so on February 18.

NASA cries planetary 'bonanza' with 715 new worlds

WASHINGTON (AFP) - NASA on Wednesday announced a torrent of new planet discoveries, hailing a "bonanza" of 715 worlds now known outside the solar system thanks to the Kepler space telescope's planet-hunting mission.

A new method for verifying potential planets led to the volume of new discoveries from Kepler, which aims to help humans search for other worlds that may be like Earth.

"What we have been able to do with this is strike the mother lode, get a veritable exoplanet bonanza," Jack Lissauer, a planetary scientist at NASA, told reporters.

"We have almost doubled just today the number of planets known to humanity," he said.

The 715 newly verified planets are orbiting 305 different stars.

The latest announcement brings the number of known planets to nearly 1,700.

Not much is known about the composition of these distant planets and whether they would truly have the conditions that would support life, such as a rocky surface, water and a distance from their stars that leaves them neither too hot nor too cold.

Four of them are potentially in the habitable zone of their stars and are about the size of



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Earth, NASA said.

Most of the new discoveries are in "multiple-planet systems much like our own solar system," and 95 percent are between the size of Earth and Neptune, which is four times larger than our planet, said the US space agency.

Most are also very close to their stars.

"The Kepler team continues to amaze and excite us with their planet hunting results," said John Grunsfeld, associate administrator for NASA's Science Mission Directorate.

The new method for verifying planets relies on a statistical technique that can be applied to multiple planets at once.

Before, scientists confirmed each planet individually based on recording the number of times it passed in front of its star. Three of these transits were enough to confirm a planet.

The discoveries announced Wednesday were all initially detected in the first two years of Kepler's observations, from 2009 to 2011, and confirmed with the new statistical method.

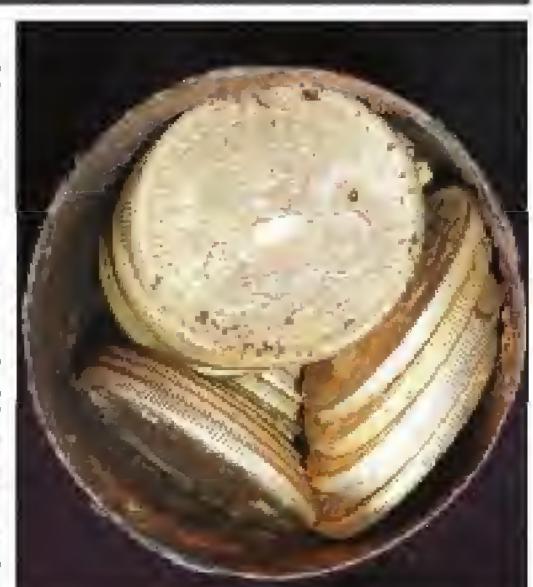
The Kepler space telescope observes some 150,000 stars, more than 3,600 of which are presumed to be planetary candidates.

Until now, 961 of Kepler's planet candidates had been

closely oriented. Scaled down plans for the telescope, called K2, have been drawn up and submitted to reviewers at NASA.

California couple strike gold with treasure trove find

LOS ANGELES (AFP) - A California couple out walking their dog struck it rich by unearthing a horde of buried gold coins, worth more than \$10 million according to experts. The so-called Saddle Ridge find is believed to be the most valuable treasure trove ever discovered in the United States, according to Kagin's Inc, which specializes in ancient gold coins.



The couple, named only as John and Mary, spotted a partially buried can jutting out of the ground -- and after further digging found seven more, with more than 1,400 gold coins. "This family literally found the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow," said company boss Donald Kagin, adding that most of the coins date from the late 19th century. What's really significant about this find... is that unlike other hoards and treasures, this one includes a great variety of dates, many of which are in pristine condition," he added. The Saddle Ridge Treasure is named after a feature on the couple's property in an area of northern California known for buried treasure since the Gold Rush in the 19th century. "Our finances won't have to dictate so many of our day-to-day decisions... The answer to our difficulties was right there under our feet for years. Don't be above bending over to check on a rusty can!"

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Overworked nurses linked to higher death rates

PARIS (AFP) - Investigations in nine European countries have given statistical backing to claims that patients' lives may be at risk when nurses are overworked, specialists said on Wednesday.

Published in The Lancet, the study touches on a sensitive topic in countries where health budgets are under strain.

Researchers looked at survival rates after surgery in 300 hospitals, and matched these against the workload and education of their nurses.

They looked at data from the surgeries of more than 420,000 patients aged over 50 who had common operations such as hip or knee replacement, appendix removal or gall bladder surgery.

The number of patients who died in hospital within 30 days of admission was low, on average. It ranged from 1.0 to 1.5 percent depending on the country.

Within a country, though, the death rate varied widely according to the hospital. In some hospitals it could be less than one percent, in others more than seven percent.

Two big factors correlated with higher mortality -- a bigger workload for nurses and a lower level of nurses' education.

Each patient added to a nurse's workload increased the risk of a patient dying by seven percent. Every 10 percent in-



crease in bachelor's degree educated nurses was associated with a seven percent fall in this risk.

"Nurse staffing cuts to save money might adversely affect patient outcomes," said the paper. "An increased emphasis on bachelor's education for nurses could reduce preventable hospital deaths."

It offered this statistical scenario: in hospitals where nurses cared for six patients each, and 60 percent of them had bachelor's degrees, the risk of patient death was nearly a third lower than in places where nurses cared for eight patients and 30 percent had a degree.

The investigation was carried out in Belgium, England, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland.

The findings in Europe closely mirror a previous probe

in the United States, said Linda Aiken, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's School of Nursing, who led the research.

"Our data suggest that a safe level of hospital nursing staff might help to reduce surgical mortality, and challenge the widely-held view that nurses' experience is more important than their education," she said in a press release.



Sweden slams EU for delay on hormone disrupting chemicals

STOCKHOLM (AFP) - Sweden threatened Wednesday to sue the European Commission over a delay in identifying harmful chemicals in everyday products.

The Commission was supposed to set criteria by December 2013 for identifying endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) in thousands of anti-bacterial products -- found in items such as clothes, shoes and toiletries -- which have been linked to cancers, birth defects and development disorders in children.

"This is so serious from an environmental and health perspective that if it's not ready within two months we will go ahead and sue the Commiss-

sion," Sweden's Environment Minister Lena Ek told public broadcaster Sveriges Radio.

European health and environment groups campaigning for EU action have claimed the Commission is giving into pressure from the chemical industry -- insisting on an impact analysis before criteria -- despite calls from scientists for quick action and a decision by the European Parliament.

In May 2013, leading public health scientists from around the world presented a declaration to the Commission, demanding strict testing of the chemicals and rejecting the EU policy that low level exposure to the chemicals is safe.

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Flamenco guitar legend Paco de Lucia dies

MADRID (AFP) - Paco de Lucia, the Spanish guitarist who brought flamenco to a world audience, has died in Mexico aged 66, his family and officials said Wednesday.

Born Francisco Sanchez Gomez, he was credited with modernising the gypsy tradition of his native Andalusia, absorbing jazz and pop influences in a decades-long career.

He died of a heart attack according to the mayor's office in his Spanish hometown of Algeciras. A family statement said he was playing with his children on a beach at the time.

"Paco de Lucia's death turns his genius into a legend," said a statement by the mayor of Algeciras, Jose Ignacio Landaluce.

"Although he has gone, his music, his wonderful way of playing and his character will always be with us."

The town called three days of mourning and flew flags at half-mast for "the greatest guitarist of all time".

Born into a humble family on December 21, 1947, de Lucia grew into a musical giant who blended jazz, pop and classical influences with the folk tradition of flamenco.

He said his father, a singer of gypsy origin, introduced him to music and encouraged him to practise for hours.

"The gypsies are better since they listen to music from birth."

If I had not been born in my father's house I would be nobody. I don't believe in spontaneous genius," the guitarist once said.

From the age of 12 de Lucia was out playing and earning at flamenco "tablao" -- the intimate bars that are home to the authentic form of the tragic gypsy lament and dancing.

He had no formal musical training, but by 15 he had moved to Madrid and by 18 brought out his first album.

It was there that he met another gifted teenage flamenco artist, the singer Camaron de la Isla, then just 15 and freshly arrived in Madrid.

The two young men formed a legendary flamenco partner-



ship, touring and recording together until Camaron's death in 1992.

In the 1980s de Lucia also teamed up with guitarists John McLaughlin and Al di Meola to produce the classic album "Friday night in San Francisco".

He branched out into jazz and bossa nova, drawing the scorn of traditionalists.

But he clung to stay faithful to his origins, hunched over his guitar and grimacing with emotion as the flamenco "duende", or spirit, possessed him.

"Whatever I do my sound will always be flamenco -- because I am what I am," he said. "Being a flamenco player is what gives me strength."

In 2004, de Lucia was awarded Spain's prestigious

Asturias Prize for the Arts as the "most universal of flamenco artists".

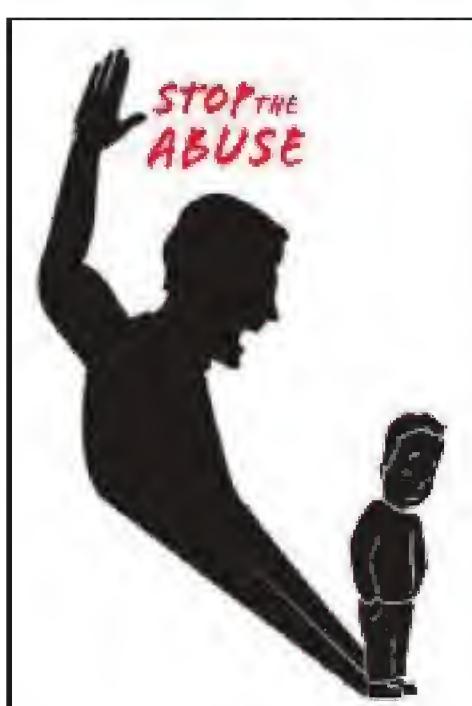
"His art has made him into one of the best ambassadors of Spanish culture in the world," the jury said at the time.

He had lived elsewhere in Spain and in Mexico and toured the world.

Spain's royal family sent telegrams of condolence, the palace said. The country's culture minister Jose Ignacio Wert called de Lucia "a unique and unrepeatable figure".

Reports put de Lucia's death in the resort city of Cancun.

"Paco lived the life he wanted and died while playing with his children by the sea," his family said in a statement.



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Wind farms can tame hurricanes: scientists



Scroby Sands wind farm off the coast of Norfolk, England, on August 27, 2008.

PARIS (AFP) - Huge offshore wind farms can protect vulnerable coastal cities against devastating cyclones like Katrina and Sandy by tempering winds and ocean surges before they reach land, a study said Wednesday.

Had such installations existed at the time, Hurricane Katrina which ravaged New Orleans in 2005, and Sandy, which smashed the coastlines of New York and New Jersey in 2012, would have been reduced to strong but not devastating winds, it said.

"The little turbines can fight back the beast," said Cristina Archer, an associate professor of Earth sciences at the University of Delaware.

The study, published in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, is the first to demonstrate that wind farms, deployed on a grand scale, can buffer violent hurricanes, the researchers said.

The team simulated the impact from farms of tens of thousands of turbines, placed kilometres (miles) offshore and along the coast of cyclone-vulnerable cities.

They found that turbine blades extracting energy from the wind on a very large scale can have a marked effect on the internal dynamics of a cy-

clone.

"We found that when wind turbines are present, they slow down the outer rotation winds of a hurricane," said Mark Jacobson, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at Stanford University in California.

"This feeds back to decrease wave height, which reduces movement of air toward the centre of the hurricane, increasing the central pressure -- which in turn slows the winds of the entire hurricane and dissipates it faster."

In the case of Hurricane Katrina, sustained peak wind speed would have been reduced by as much as 44 metres per second (158 kilometres or 98 miles per hour).

The storm blew maximum gusts, but not sustained peaks, of about 282 kph (175 mph), according to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), a US government agency.

Katrina's storm surge -- waves whipped up by the exceptional winds -- would have abated by up to 79 percent, said the study.

In the case of Tropical Storm Sandy, the model projected a drop of up to 140 kph (87 mph) in sustained peak

wind speed and a 34-percent decrease in storm surge.

When Sandy, at an earlier stage, was rated as a powerful Category 3 hurricane, it packed gusts of up to 185 kph (115 mph).

According to the study, the turbines should not be damaged and would continue to produce power during these events.

By taming the leading edge of the storm, they would also dissipate the buildup of the winds that followed.

As a result, the wind speed would not exceed the turbines' designed cutout speed -- a threshold that prompts the device to go into lockdown and feather its blades to prevent damage.

The turbine arrays used in the simulation were gigantic -- 78,000 machines generating more than 300 gigawatts of electricity.

This is thousands of times the size of the biggest offshore wind farm in the world today -- the London Array in southeastern England, which has 175 turbines.

But, according to the study, these mega-farms would pay for themselves by generating electricity in addition to providing storm protection.

A 32-km (20-mile) installation off the New York coast would cost about \$210 billion (153 billion euros) to build.

By way of comparison, Tropical Storm Sandy inflicted about \$80 billion (\$8 billion euros) in damage when it hit three states in 2012.

The disaster spawned plans to build higher sea walls to shield New York from rising storm surges expected from climate change -- a project that carries estimated costs of between \$10-29 billion but produces no revenue.

Merkel warned of German scientists 'brain drain'

BERLIN (AFP) - Germany is grappling with a scientists' brain drain as many of the brightest academic minds are moving away, an expert panel warned in a report to Chancellor Angela Merkel on Wednesday.

Some researchers return to Europe's top economy, but overall Germany is not attracting enough scientists of the same calibre as those who have gone abroad, the report said.

Between 1996 and 2011, more than 23,000 active scientists emigrated, while around 19,500 came to work in Germany.

German scientists make up the biggest group of foreign researchers in many countries, including the United States, Switzerland, Netherlands and Belgium, the report said.

To counter the trend, the experts advised the government to implement programmes to seduce back leading scientists.

They also called for Berlin to push on with setting up centres of excellence within the German university system.

And they invited German re-

search institutes to step up their recruitment of foreign staff and to make every effort to keep them.

The report welcomed the fact that German spending on research and development is at around its target of three percent of gross domestic product.

But it noted that German companies were increasingly spending their research budgets overseas.

Between 2009 and 2011, German companies' research and development expenditure outside of Germany jumped by more than 15 percent a year, compared to a 5.7-percent increase in Germany.

The report also criticised Germany's system of providing support to renewable sources of energy which, it said, was a "failure" notably for triggering a sharp rise in costs.

Berlin is currently working on reforming the law which deals with subsidies for electricity production from renewable sources, financed by a surcharge on consumers.

Two detained in Philippines in online child abuse raid



MANILA (AFP) - Four minors have been rescued and two suspects detained in the Philippines following a raid on an apartment where children were made to disrobe for Internet cameras, the judicial officials said Wednesday.

The Manila raid followed a tip-off from the United States Department of Homeland Security, said Dante Bonoan, anti-human trafficking division chief of the justice department's National Bureau of Investigation.

"The exploited minors were asked to show their sex parts to their clients," he told reporters, adding that the website's paid subscribers were mostly from the United States, Canada and European countries.

Police say the Philippines is a key centre of the fast-growing global industry that streams live images of children forced to commit sex acts

for paedophiles abroad, with thousands of children in the impoverished nation abused.

Police in Britain, Australia and the Philippines announced last month that they had jointly dismantled a paedophile ring that streamed live sexual abuse of Filipino children as young as six over the web. In some cases, the victims' parents were involved.

The international operation rescued 15 victims aged between six and 15, while 29 people were arrested. More than 700 other suspects were being investigated, according to Britain's National Crime Agency.

Bonoan said two persons suspected of running the Manila apartment operation were detained, but no details about them were given.

The authorities also seized laptops, desktop computers, cameras, and other gadgets, he added.



Current as of: 02/26/2014

	Currency Code	Buying rate banknotes	Buying Cheques	Selling Rate
U.S.A.	USD	1.77	1.78	1.80
Dutch Antilles	ANG	92.00	100.00	100.20
Canada	CAD	1.77	1.79	1.62
Britain	GBP	2.80	2.85	3.02
Switzerland	CHF	191.71	192.43	201.82
Netherlands	EUR	236.59	232.69	246.92
Sweden	SEK	25.91	26.63	27.92
Denmark	DKK	30.23	30.95	33.32
Norway	NOK	30.67	31.39	29.98
Japan	JPY	214.88	216.84	175.75
(per 10,000)				
All rates for amounts up to AWG 100,00 per item.				

US stocks edge higher ahead of Yellen testimony

NEW YORK (AFP) - US stocks Wednesday finished with modest gains as investors looked ahead to Today's congressional testimony by Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average advanced 18.75 points (0.12 percent) to 16,198.41. The broad-based S&P 500 finished flat, up 0.04 point at 1,845.16, while the tech-rich Nasdaq Composite Index gained 4.48 (0.10 percent) at 4,292.06.

Analysts said investors were looking ahead to Yellen's testimony at a Senate panel Thursday following a stream of mostly disappointing economic data that has been blamed in part on unusually cold weather.

The S&P 500 again flirted with a new peak, but failed to clinch a record.

"We've seen a very powerful rally for the S&P 500," said David Levy, portfolio manager at Kenjol Capital Management. "What we're waiting for is a catalyst to drive the market higher."

Levy said the day's data showing a big jump in new-home sales in January, while positive, was already "priced in" to stocks.

Retailer Target shot up 7.0 percent on fiscal fourth-quarter net earnings of \$1.30 per share that came in at the high end of the company's forecast range. However, profit fell 45.9 percent from a year ago and the company said 2014 earnings would be weighed down by costs relating to a giant data breach.

Strong earnings and an expanded share buyback program from home improvement chain Lowe's pushed its shares up 5.4 percent.

eBay gained 2.1 percent as the online marketplace engaged in a fresh war of words with activist investor Carl Icahn following Icahn's call two days ago for eBay to spin off its PayPal subsidiary.

First Solar tumbled 9.1 percent on a big earnings miss. Quarterly profits came in at 89 cents per share, 10 cents shy of expectations. Revenues also underperformed.

Bond prices rose. The yield on the 10-year US Treasury fell to 2.67 percent from 2.70 percent late Tuesday, while the 30-year declined to 3.63 percent from 3.66 percent.

US awards Boeing \$2 bn contract for spy planes

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The Pentagon has awarded Boeing a \$2.1 billion contract to build 16 more P-8A maritime surveillance aircraft for the US Navy, according to defense officials. The long-range Poseidon spy plane is based on Boeing's 737 commercial airliner and the Navy is anxious to move ahead to replace its aging fleet of P-3 Orion aircraft, which have been flying for decades. The performance of the plane's radars and anti-submarine weapons have come under question in some Pentagon tests but the contract decision indicated officials were ready to press ahead. Boeing already has a major contract to modify 767 commercial airliners for the US Air Force's new aerial refueling tanker. Analysts say the company hopes to apply the same approach to future military contracts. The Navy has plans to eventually buy 117 of the P-8 planes to replace the P-3 aircraft.

Obama touts \$300 billion transport plan

ST PAUL (AFP) - President Barack Obama on Wednesday unveiled a four year, \$300 billion plan to rebuild America's highways, bridges and rail systems, hoping to defy gridlock in Congress to enact major reform.

Obama's initiative marked his latest attempt to animate his second term, even though hopes of big political change are already dimming as Washington fixates on November's congressional elections.

The plan would replace a current transportation funding bill which expires in September.

It prioritizes infrastructure improvements, a goal Obama has pushed for years but with limited success amid skepticism among Republicans in Congress.

The president traveled to the midwestern state of Minnesota and a renovated train depot in the city of St Paul which has been closed for decades but was restored and will now serve as a hub for buses, light rail and trains.

Obama's plan, to be detailed in his budget due to be re-

leased next week, is billed as a way to overhaul creaking transportation networks and to support hundreds of thousands of jobs.

The president proposed partly funding the plan with a \$150 billion dollar windfall from revamped business taxes in a massive overhaul of the US tax code.

However, few observers believe that reform will make it through Congress in mid-term election year, leaving the fate of his transportation initiative in doubt.

His Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx warned that Congress must start working with the administration on a new bill, or risk pushing the United States over a "transportation cliff" if funding expires later this year.

Obama's plan would replenish the Highway Trust Fund, which is used to repair and maintain roads and is financed by federal diesel and gasoline taxes.

It would send money to other road repair projects and invest in light rail and other

systems in growing American cities in a bid to ease traffic congestion and cut commute times.

It would also expand a national freight program designed to improve business and manufacturing competitiveness using road, rail and ports.

In a sign of his determination to use his executive power at a time when rival lawmakers are blocking most of his agenda, Obama also announced \$600 million to fund new grants to fund projects on road, rail and port projects.

So far in his presidency, the so-called TIGER grant program has doled out \$3.5 billion to 270 projects in all 50 states.

The initial grants were included in a \$800 billion stimulus plan introduced by Obama in his first year in office when the US economy teetered on the edge of a depression.

The stimulus is often lambasted by Republicans as a massive waste of money -- but Obama on Wednesday insisted it "actually worked -- despite what everybody claims."

Programs to redistribute income good for growth: IMF

WASHINGTON (AFP) - The International Monetary Fund came out Wednesday in support of the fight against income inequality, with Fund economists saying income redistribution efforts can strengthen economic growth.

Plunging into a debate over the gap between rich and poor that is fueling political battles from the United States to Brazil to Thailand, economists from the Fund said there is already general agreement that inequality can fuel economic and political instability.

But do policies to redistribute income help or hurt growth? asked economists Jonathan Ostry, Andrew Berg and Charalambos Tsangarides.

The answer, they said, is a net gain, even if there is an initial cost to an economy from taxes and transfers which aim to close an income gap.

The trio cited the benefits of taxes on activities of the wealthy that could hurt an economy, like excessive financial speculation, and payments to the poor to support their children going to school.

Much of the thinking has been that, even if a large wealth gap is bad, that the cures of taxes and wealth transfers to correct the problem usually hamper growth.

"Many argue that redistribution undermines growth, and even that efforts to redistribute to address high inequality are the source of the correlation between inequality and low growth," they said.

"If this is right, then taxes and transfers may be precisely the wrong remedy: a cure that may be worse than the disease itself."

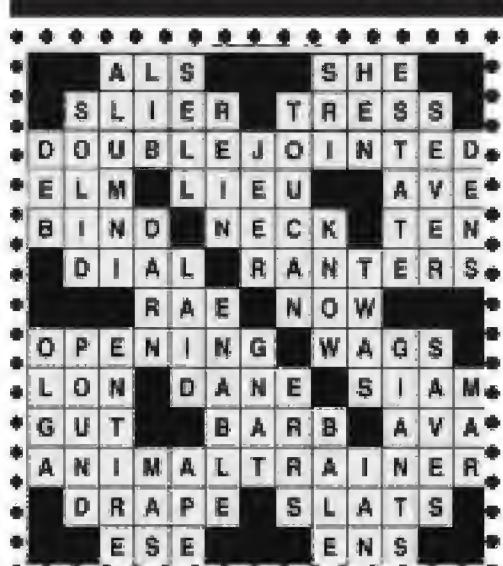
But the authors said that experience across a number of countries has provided "remarkably little evidence" for that conclusion.

Indeed, they said, "faster and more durable growth seems to have followed the associated reduction in inequality."

The authors are cautious to avoid saying the effects of redistribution are positive in every case or situation, and note that extreme efforts can have a bad outcome.

But overall, they argue that redistribution programs should not be excluded from policy out of fear they would hold back an economy.

YESTERDAY'S Crossword Answer

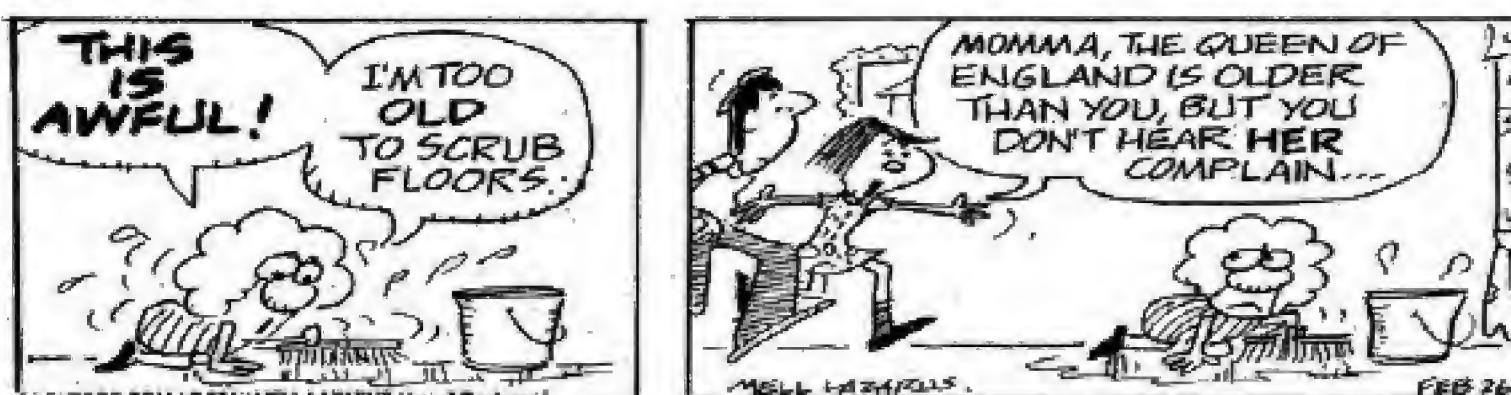


COMICS

PICKLES



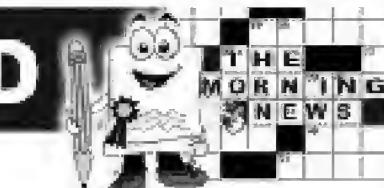
MOMMA



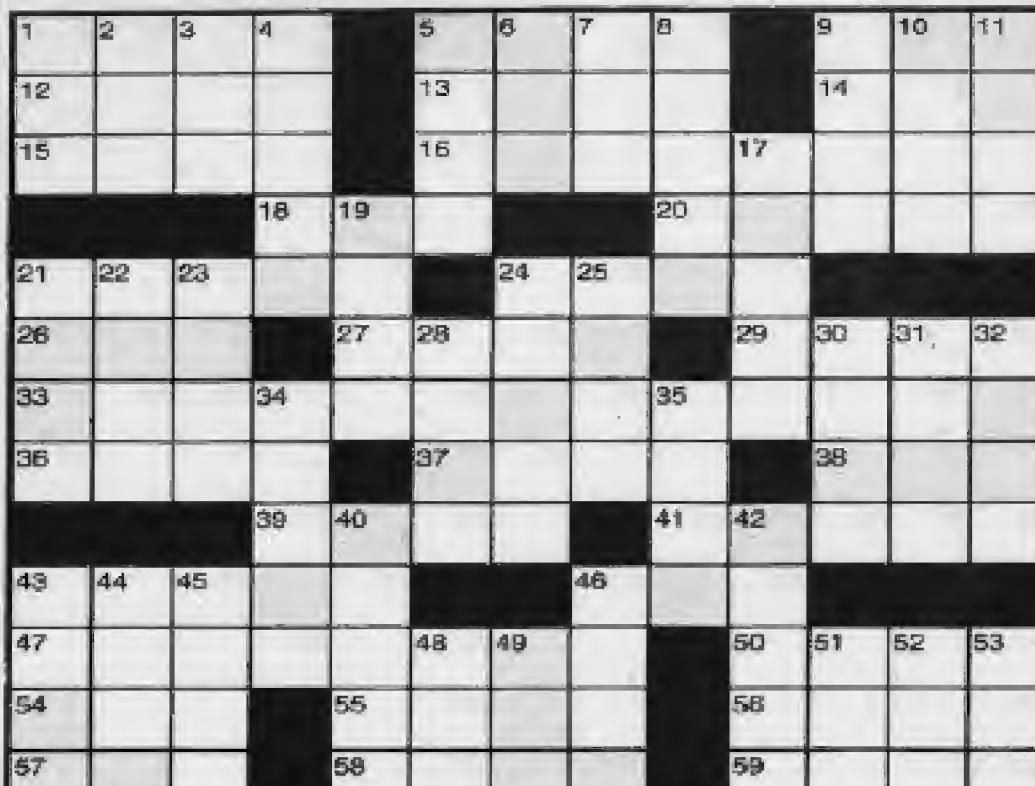
CALVIN and HOBBES



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ACROSS

- Gullible ones
- Greek god of war
- Midsection muscles
- Small wedge
- Leaf-collecting tool
- "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire" (2 wds.)
- London art gallery
- Board game
- Fleur-de-lys
- Braces' places
- Biblical song
- Crow's-nest support
- Actor McKellen
- Utters
- House (Sp.)
- Fox animated sitcom (4 wds.)
- Robert ___ of Va. (2 wds.)
- Attention-getting sound
- Pooh's friend
- Showery mos.
- Perhaps
- Tilt-a-ride
- Poor review
- Gibberish
- Opera singer
- TV's Matlock

DOWN

- Speedy jet (abbr.)
- "By Jove!"
- Orchestra space
- Sniff
- Circle parts
- Pep rally sound
- Barely make do
- Religious groups
- Busy as ___ (2)
- wds.)
- Sinister
- Newspaper inserts
- College-entrance tests (abbr.)
- Furry swimmer
- Speedy jet (abbr.)
- "By Jove!"
- Orchestra space
- Sniff
- Circle parts
- Pep rally sound
- Barely make do
- Religious groups
- Busy as ___ (2)
- Ernie's roommate
- Beauty contestant's banner
- Yawl's cousin
- "___ Lonesome I Could Cry" (2 wds.)
- Toll road
- Take the yacht
- "___ of Green Gables"
- Legends
- Tennis great Arthur ___
- Distant
- Like lemon chiffon
- Neatnik's opposite
- Sunburn-soothing plant
- Transmission parts
- Madame Bovary
- Fervent requests
- Chilean mountains
- Sheryl Swoopes's league (abbr.)
- Did garden work
- Guest houses
- Black-eyed ___
- Gp. once headed by Heston
- Hold session
- "___ had it!"
- Through
- Lion's share plus

SOLUTION

6	1	9	6	7	9	8	2
8	2	7	4	1	9	5	3
9	9	6	2	8	7	4	1
6	7	9	3	2	5	1	2
7	8	1	6	9	8	2	4
2	5	8	2	9	1	6	3
9	2	4	8	5	7	6	1
7	9	8	1	6	3	5	2

Complete the grid so that every row and every column contains the numbers 1 through 9
A number is Never repeated in a row or column.
In addition every rectangle must contain the numbers 1 through 9

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Sudoku

			2		6			1
2	7				5		4	
	9			5				6
6	3							
4		8		9		3		
							6	4
7				8		9		
3	5				2	7		
2			7		5			

Excellent dining, charming ambiance and a breathtaking view found only at *La Trattoria El Faro Blanco*



The Outside Deck

-- Over twenty years ago, a very clever person had the idea of placing a cozy little restaurant on the top of the cliff adjacent to the California Lighthouse, offering the most stunning view of Aruba imaginable. La Trattoria el Faro Blanco took over the location some years ago, and

the restaurant's quaint trappings, superb selection and amenable staff has made it a one of the island's most popular dining spots ever since.

Savoring the sight of a spectacular Aruban sunset and the tiered layout of the eatery also makes it the ideal spot for marking a special occasion, such as an anniver-

sary or a marriage proposal, as well as a perfect venue for weddings or a celebratory party. An extensive and diverse menu and wine list allows those planning a special festivity will be able to devise a memorable event and management is ready and willing to help you stay within your budget.

Many have taken note of this singular location as the place to go for that memorable romantic meal, and their reservation staff reports a waiting list for the rail tables that offer the best unobstructed view, recommending reservations well in advance if this is important to you.

The restaurant is now open from early in the day for refreshments, and is the perfect lunch stop while touring, serving from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM, after which visitors can enjoy a light snack from

their Pizza Mini Menu until 6:00 PM when they officially open for dinner, until 11:00 PM.

All these aspects of charming surroundings, dining al fresco with a breathtaking view

(or in their enclosed air-conditioned dining room, if you prefer) and fine food makes La Trattoria El Faro the single dining experience that must not be missed be-

fore departing Aruba.

Reservations can be made by calling 586-0786 or 586-0787, or via e-mail link at their website, www.aruba-latrattoria.com, where you can peruse their latest menu, as Chef Alberto is always devising some tasty new specialty to take advantage of what is fresh for the season.

Osso Buco with Risotto bon



O Condominiums A small, exclusive boutique condo resort tailored to your taste



Aruba's most successful developers of secure, superior communities for both the permanent and part time resident market, will soon break ground on what they consider their most exclusive project to date. Known for 16 years of unmatched quality and service, the Cas Bon people are proud to unveil their new pet

project: O Condominiums. This is the same company which developed the innovative Gold Coast Villas community in Malmok.

Renowned for reliable construction, developers of O Condominiums consider the boutique community will be the "jewel in the crown" of the nine projects they have successfully completed and

maintain. It is only three stories and twenty luxurious units, of which 14 will be oceanfront, the remainder, ocean view. Sizes range from one bedroom condominiums with a bath and a half to three-bedrooms, each bedroom with its own bath, and an additional guest half/bath. The designs include a family entertainment room that will

be specially fitted with electronic and Internet connections and outlets enabling a state-of-the-art-home theater. An important aspect of this singular facility is owners have various options to customize kitchens and fixtures to their particular tastes and standards.

Each apartment sports an extremely spacious 35 square meter covered terrace overlooking the sea. Windows will be double-paneled and doors

have weather stripping to insure less cost on air-conditioning, which is integrated into construction. Homeowners will have input into the finishing they prefer in the kitchen and other rooms, to customize your condominium to your taste. Public amenities will include an elegant pool deck, concierge

services, lounge area, BBQ station, fitness room, assigned parking, additional outside storage for bicycles and personal items, and 24-hour security. A quiet, secluded section of Eagle beach is only a few steps from the front door.

O Condominiums officially opened the doors of their sales office onsite at Eagle Beach on December 24. Interested parties can inspect the project in a spacious plot right next to the gourmet Screaming Eagle restaurant. The project is directed towards discerning clients seeking a top quality property on Aruba in an ideal, tranquil, beachfront location. Prospective property owners will find the Cas Bon people enjoy an exceptional reputation on Aruba for excellence and reliability.

Contact the sales office at 297-732-0000/ 297-287-5300 or visit their website: <http://www.o-eaglebeacharuba.com>

Golf: Tiger tees off near home but thinking of Masters

PALM BEACH GARDENS, (AFP) - World number one Tiger Woods makes his third start of the year today at the US PGA Tour Honda Classic near his home but his thoughts are already on the Masters.

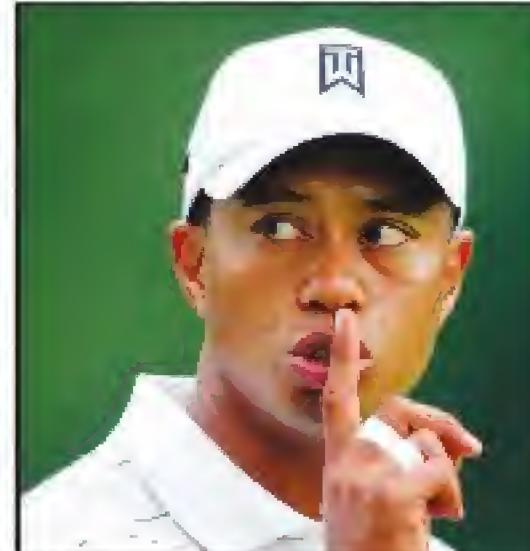
Woods, a 14-time major champion chasing the record 18 major wins of Jack Nicklaus, will be tested by an all-star lineup in the \$6 million event at PGA National.

Reigning Masters champion Adam Scott of Australia, reigning British Open champion Phil Mickelson and Northern Ireland stars Rory McIlroy and Graeme McDowell are also in the field at the first of four consecutive Florida stops on the US tour ahead of the year's first major, the Masters, in early April at Augusta National.

"Once we get to Florida, we're all thinking about it, on our way to Augusta," Woods said.

"For most of the guys, this is like their prep to Augusta this week. The quality and the depth of the field has gotten so much better in recent years."

Woods is already pondering how the 17th hole at Augusta National will play now that the huge century-old pine nicknamed the Eisenhower Tree



has been removed from the left side of the fairway following damage from an ice storm.

"I've hit it a few times. It's an iconic landmark," Woods said. "I can't say some of the guys are going to miss it, but there will be a difference, no doubt about it."

Woods, who tees off from the 10th tee today in round one alongside 2007 Masters champion Zach Johnson and 2011 PGA Championship winner Keegan Bradley, lives near enough to be able to sleep in his own bed every night.

"I'm going home to my own home, my own remote (TV command), my own bed -- those are things we don't get to do very often," Woods said. "Most golfers spend pretty much their entire career on the road."

Woods will be making only his third start at the event, staged on a 7,241-yard layout that has had the toughest scoring in relation to par outside the majors, but one drenched by rain.

"The fairways are a little bit spotty with all the rain we've had," Woods said. "I didn't expect the greens to be this slow. They have kept them slower than they normally are. We're going to have to make a few adjustments there."

Woods shared 80th at Torrey Pines and 41st at Dubai in his two prior 2014 starts. In 16 of his 17 pro seasons, Woods has finished in the top six or better at least once in his first three starts to a year.

But he does like the state of his swing.

"It feels good," Woods said after a Wednesday practice round. "I was pleasantly surprised with how well I was hitting it."

And while the Masters is on his mind, Woods is more concerned about victory this week than how well he is hitting the ball.

"If I hit it great and win, if I slap it all over the place and win, I win," he said. "That's the intent."

Football: Chelsea in pole position after Galatasaray draw

ISTANBUL (AFP) - Chelsea have the upper hand in their Champions League last-16 tie with Galatasaray after coming away from a testing environment in Istanbul with a 1-1 first-leg draw on Wednesday.

The visitors led at half-time thanks to an early goal from Fernando Torres, but Galatasaray improved in the second half and restored parity after the hour mark when Cameroon defender Aurelien Chedjou found the net.

A draw was a fair reflection of the way the game went, but Chelsea will now hope to finish the job in the return at Stamford Bridge on March 18.

Meanwhile, his opposite number Roberto Mancini admitted his team's second half display also gives them a chance.

"We played very well and I'm confident after the second half," he said. "After this game we have a 40 percent chance to go through."

Mourinho opted to select Torres in attack ahead of Samuel Eto'o in one of three changes to the team that beat Everton at the weekend, with

Ramires and Andre Schuerle also coming in.

It proved to be an excellent decision as it was Torres who finished off a clinical breakaway to put the Blues in front with just nine minutes played, giving Chelsea the lead they deserved as their hosts paid for a poor start.

A lively Torres almost made it 2-0 for Chelsea in the 52nd minute, bursting through the middle of the home back line before seeing his shot turned behind for a corner by Muslera.

However, Galatasaray finally started to grow into the contest in the second half, the

raucous crowd receiving a lift when Gary Cahill nearly turned the ball into his own net after intercepting a Burak Yilmaz pass intended for Drogba.

The Ivorian striker almost created an equaliser against his old club in the 62nd minute, heading down a left-wing cross for Selcuk Inan, but the home captain somehow contrived to stab the ball against the post from a yard out.

The Turkish champions were not to be denied a leveller three minutes later, though, Chedjou wriggling free of his marker to convert a Sneijder corner from point-blank range.

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BRIEFS:



Injured Russian skier has 'no feeling from waist down'

MOSCOW (AFP) - The Russian freestyle skier who was hospitalised after a serious accident at the Sochi Winter Olympic Games said Wednesday she has no feeling from the waist down. Maria Komissarova, 23, was flown to Germany for treatment for a fractured spine following a crash in training for the ski cross event at Sochi 2014, by far the worst accident of the Winter Games. She has undergone several operations in Russia and Germany after the accident but until now there had been no specific information about her condition. However Komissarova revealed in a message on her Instagram account that she was currently paralysed from the waist down. "I do not feel my body lower than my belly button," she wrote. "But I am strong and I know that some day I will definitely be on my feet again."



Real Madrid demolish Schalke to ease towards last eight

GELSENKIRCHEN (AFP) - Real Madrid turned in a clinical away performance to thrash Schalke 04 6-1 and stand on the brink of the quarter-finals after their Champions League last 16 first leg tie on Wednesday. French international Karim Benzema, Welshman Gareth Bale and Cristiano Ronaldo all scored twice in a one-sided victory for Carlo Ancelotti's men at the Veltins Arena. Dutchman Klaas-Jan Huntelaar picked up a last minute consolation goal for the Bundesliga outfit. The return leg of their last-16 tie now appears to be a formality for the nine-time champions at the Santiago Bernabeu on March 18.

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GOLF: Five groups to follow at the 2014 Honda Classic

FLORIDA - The PGA Tour kicks off its Florida swing Today in Palm Beach Gardens for the Honda Classic. Here are five groups to keep an eye on Thursday and Friday.

1. Tiger Woods, Keegan Bradley, Zach Johnson -- Typically, people don't need much added incentive to follow Tiger. But Woods, who hasn't played since the Farmers Insurance Open, has never won the Honda Classic, nor has he won -- a rarity given Woods' almost-universal success. Bradley and Johnson, the latter of whom started the season white hot, both lost in the first round of last week's WGC-Accenture Match Play Championship.

2. Adam Scott, Rory McIlroy, Billy Horschel -- McIlroy

won this tournament two years ago, but he didn't give himself a chance to repeat, withdrawing after eight holes because his teeth hurt. Scott is back on the course after a six-week hiatus, while Horschel, too, looks to bounce back from a first round exit -- albeit at the hands of eventual champion, Jason Day -- at last week's WGC-Accenture Match Play Championship.

3. Phil Mickelson, Graeme McDowell, Rickie Fowler -- Fowler hasn't exactly been a model of consistency, but he's played well lately and performed well historically in this tournament. McDowell, too, has played well at the Honda, while Mickelson, ironically, will be the one of these three with the least amount of experience in this event. He hasn't played the Honda since '02.

4. Henrik Stenson, Sergio Garcia, Luke Donald -- Donald won this event in '06, though it was played at a different course. Stenson is looking to build on his FedEx Cup championship year of 2013, while we'll see if Garcia continues his American goodwill tour after conceding a 17-foot putt to Rickie Fowler at last week's match play championships.

5. Michael Thompson, Lee Westwood, Robert Allenby -- It may come as a surprise, but last year's winner at the Honda Classic came out of this group, and it's not Westwood. Or Allenby. It's Thompson, who got his first and only PGA Tour win a year ago in this event. As for Westwood, Thursday will mark just the second round he's played since firing his swing coach, Sean Foley.

NBA: Felton will play for Knicks despite gun charges



NEW YORK (AFP) - New York Knicks guard Raymond Felton will play at reigning NBA champion Miami on Thursday despite his arrest on gun charges, Knicks coach Mike Woodson said Wednesday.

Felton returned to practice a day after being charged with criminal possession of a weapon and criminal possession of a firearm and posting \$25,000 bail. A hearing will be conducted June 2.

Until then, Felton can travel and play with the Knicks as they try to climb into playoff

position in the Eastern Conference.

Felton, 29, thanked his teammates for their support and vowed not to speak about off-court matters.

Woodson said he would support Felton and that he knew little about the arrest, which police say stemmed from his estranged wife turning in a handgun to police.

At 21-36, the Knicks are 1/2 games behind Atlanta for the final Eastern Conference playoff berth. Miami, 40-14, has the third-best record in the NBA.

NBA: George powers Pacers over Lakers

INDIANAPOLIS (AFP) - Indiana's Paul George scored 20 points while contributing seven rebounds and six assists to spark the NBA-leading Pacers over the Los Angeles Lakers 118-98 on Tuesday.

The Pacers improved to 43-13, staying just ahead of Oklahoma City (43-14) for the league's best record, while the Lakers fell to 19-38, the worst mark in the Western Conference.

Evan Turner, making his Indiana debut after being obtained from Philadelphia at the NBA trade deadline, came off the bench to score 13 for the Pacers while Lance Stephen-

son added 13 points and nine rebounds for the winners.

Kent Bazemore scored a career-best 23 points in a losing cause as the Lakers lost for the sixth time in seven games.

Indiana swept the two-game season series with the Lakers for the first time since the 1991-92 campaign.

Pau Gasol's jumper pulled the Lakers within 59-58 early in the third quarter but the Pacers followed with a 12-1 run.

George netted 12 of his 20 points in the period and Indiana's 17-4 run to conclude the third quarter stretched the Pacers lead to 91-70.

Angels reel in Trout with record deal



LOS ANGELES (AFP) - The Los Angeles Angels agreed to terms on a one-year deal worth \$1 million with outfielder Mike Trout on Wednesday while talks continue about a long-term Major League Baseball contract. The deal was the richest for a player who faces possible contract renewal but not arbitration, bettering the \$900,000 given to Ryan Howard by Philadelphia in 2007 and Albert Pujols by St. Louis in 2003. The 22-year-old American hit .323 with 27 home runs and 97 runs batted in and was walked 110 times last season but made only \$510,000, making him one of baseball's best payroll bargains. In 2012, Trout was the American League Rookie of the Year, batting .326 with 30 homers, 83 runs batted in and 49 stolen bases. The Angels did not want a long-term Trout deal counted toward their salary cap in 2014 in order to avoid a luxury tax payment, so the short-term deal likely sets the stage for a longer-term pact starting in 2015.

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**Motorcycling:
Bautista
fastest in
Sepang test**

SEPANG (AFP) - Honda's Alvaro Bautista posted the fastest time on day one of a test session in Malaysia on Wednesday, as MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez missed the practice with a broken leg.

Honda rider Marquez had torn up the Sepang circuit at a test session earlier this month, topping the timesheets through all three days and signalling he plans a spirited defence of his crown this year.

But the Spanish rider is expected to be out of action for a few weeks after breaking his leg during a dirt-track training session in his home country last week.

His compatriot Bautista topped the timesheet in 2 minutes 00.848 seconds on Wednesday, while fellow Spaniard Aleix Espargaro on a Yamaha was second fastest at 2:00.900.

Spanish MotoGP rookie Pol Espargaro, the younger brother of Aleix, was third quickest, 0.151 seconds off the pace. Italy's Andrea Dovizioso on a Ducati was fourth.

Riders, however, complained of a dusty track and poor tyre traction which meant they were unable to get close to the track record set three weeks ago by Marquez.

The current session ends on Friday.

A three-day session follows at Phillip Island from March 3, followed by another at Qatar's Losail circuit before the new season kicks off at Losail on March 23.

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Sport: Bolt, Williams in running for Laureus honours

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP) - Jamaican sprint ace Usain Bolt has been nominated for what would be a record fourth Laureus Award, while US tennis player Serena Williams is also in the star-studded short-list, organisers said Wednesday.

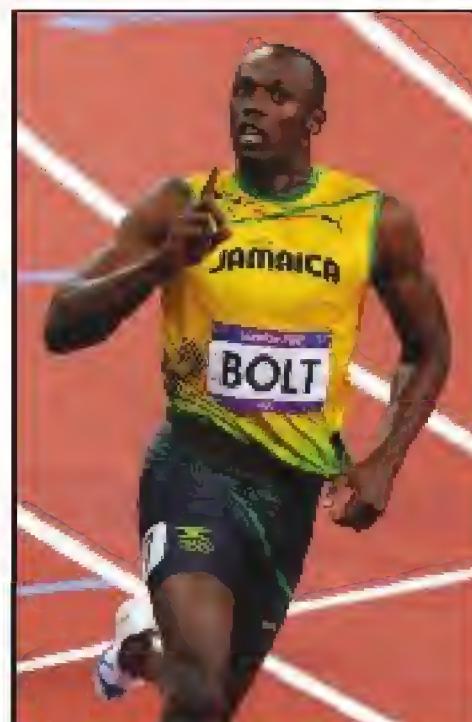
Joining Bolt as nominees for the prestigious "Laureus World Sportsman of the Year Award" are British distance runner Mo Farah, US basketball star LeBron James, tennis ace Rafael Nadal of Spain, Portuguese football player Cristiano Ronaldo and Ger-

man Formula One champion Sebastian Vettel.

Bolt has previously won a Laureus award in 2009, 2010 and 2013.

Besides Williams, the "Laureus World Sportswoman of the Year" could go to German football player Nadine Angerer, US swimmer Missy Franklin, Jamaican sprinter Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce, pole vaulter Yelena Isinbayeva of Russia or Slovenian skier Tina Maze.

US golfer Tiger Woods has



been nominated for "Laureus World Comeback of the Year", together with Brazilian footballer Ronaldinho, Nadal, Isinbayeva and two others.

This year's award ceremony will take place in the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur on March 26, after organisers shifted it from Rio De Janeiro, which hosted it in 2013.

The ceremony became the second international sport-linked event in recent months to relocate due to Brazilian au-

thorities' fears over potential protests against public spending on sports events.

Brazil will stage football's World Cup this summer, while Rio de Janeiro hosts the 2016 Olympics.

The winners of the awards are chosen by the Laureus World Sports Academy, whose jury is made up of 46 sports stars.

Bolt won the male award last year, his third win, while British athletics queen Jessica Ennis won the top prize in the women's category.